

DMV Reaches Out to Drivers in Wisconsin with Roundabout Flyers in Mailings

Location

State of Wisconsin
(Central United States)

Implementation Stage

- ✓ Planning
- ✓ Design
- ✓ Construction
- ✓ Launch
- ✓ Post-Implementation

Roundabout Type/Setting

Single and multi-lane roundabouts in urban, suburban, and rural areas

Target Audience

- ✓ General Public

Strategies Employed

- ✓ Driver's Education Handbook information sheets
- ✓ Direct-mail flyers to every registered vehicle owner
- ✓ Commercial Vehicle Handbook information sheet (coming soon)
- ✓ Instructional YouTube videos and MP3s



Background

In 2004, the Southeast (SE) Region of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) was planning to build four new roundabouts, and the SE region director requested that more than the typical amount of public outreach be undertaken for this effort. He knew that previous roundabout projects in other parts of the State had been met with resistance, and he concluded that by informing citizens about roundabouts before there was a project in the area, there would be greater public acceptance of them when a project was eventually announced.

In response to this request, WisDOT engineers began to strategize how to best educate the general public. Understanding that people take in information through different media, they realized that reaching out through only one medium, such as broadcast news, would mean that many citizens would not receive the messages about roundabouts that they were trying to send. As a result, the agency adopted a multi-pronged approach to getting the word out about how to use roundabouts—including one that targets every licensed driver in the state.

Approach

Wisconsin uses an innovative program designed to provide information to all registered vehicle owners in the state through their Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV). WisDOT does this by working continuously with the DMV to include a flyer on roundabout information with every vehicle registration mail-out in the state, whether a new registration or a renewal. Expanding on this concept, a roundabout information sheet is now included in the Wisconsin Motorist's Handbook used in both the public and private high schools in Wisconsin.

To reach younger drivers, the agency recently released instructional YouTube videos and audio recordings (MP3s) on the correct ways to navigate a multi-lane roundabout. The video has been sent to all public and private driving schools, state representatives and senators, public TV stations, and many trucking firms for training purposes. The video has also been distributed to municipal and county police agencies, libraries, and municipalities for use at public informational meetings.

WisDOT is also expanding its outreach to commercial vehicles; the agency is currently drafting an information sheet to include with the Wisconsin Commercial Vehicle Handbook to show commercial vehicle drivers the different types of roundabouts and give them tips on navigating them.

WisDOT has also included a panel on their state maps with a diagram of a roundabout as well as instructions on how to drive them properly in an effort to reach out not only to state citizens but also to those from other areas who may be traveling through Wisconsin and encounter a roundabout on their trips. These maps are available online and at welcome centers.

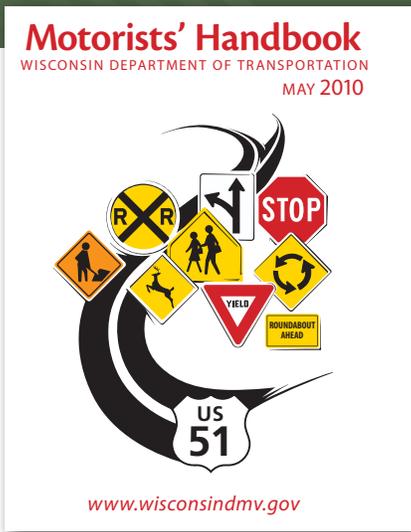


Figure 1: The Wisconsin Driver's Manual features instructions on how to navigate roundabouts (cover page).

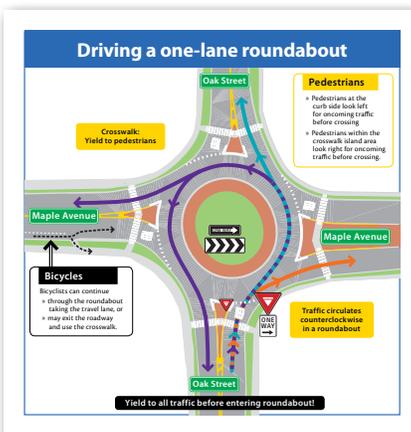


Figure 2: The Wisconsin Driver's Manual features instructions on how to navigate roundabouts (inside page).

Results

WisDOT notes that the direct-mail flyers seem to be particularly effective because most of the phone calls it receives are from people who received the flyer with their registration materials and have follow-up questions. This is important because it means people are responding to accurate, factual information, and are not reacting to misinformation about roundabouts and how they work.

The overall success of these efforts is best measured by the number of roundabouts across the State of Wisconsin, where between WisDOT-owned and locally-owned intersections, there are an estimated 150 existing roundabouts through early 2011, with a few dozen more planned for the 2011 construction season.

Lessons Learned

- Use a number of different approaches to educate the public about roundabouts. Not everyone uses the same medium to get their information, so plan in advance for more than one way of reaching out.
- One method that was particularly effective for WisDOT was including roundabout flyers with vehicle registration mailouts because it targeted every registered vehicle owner in the State.
- Specifically targeting drivers of all ages and experience levels, as well as commercial drivers, helped to ensure that all drivers had the information they needed to feel more comfortable navigating roundabouts.

Outreach Investment

The cost involved the creation and printing of materials for inclusion in driving manuals. More than 4 million color flyers have been sent out for only about \$20,000. For the recently produced videos, \$5,000 was spent on the *All About Wisconsin Roundabouts* video, and around \$35,000 was spent on the two US-41 roundabout videos linked below.

Related Products

Driver's Handbook

Wisconsin Drivers E-Handbook

<http://www.dot.state.wi.us/drivers/docs/e-handbook.pdf>

Videos

All About Wisconsin Roundabouts video

<http://dotmedia.wi.gov/main/Viewer/?peid=6ea250de-497a-44ea-8a40-9a9ee9fb3956>

US-41/Mason Street Interchange Roundabout, Southbound video (describes in detail with animation how to drive through a multi-lane roundabout)

<http://dotmedia.wi.gov/main/Viewer/?peid=b79d92ca304e4b1885e101c8ebf3dc90>

US-41/Mason Street Interchange Roundabout, Westbound video (describes in detail with animation how to drive through a multilane roundabout)

<http://dotmedia.wi.gov/main/Viewer/?peid=80661c91ea144887b4aef1a0cde04c3d>

Learn More

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